The
COMMONWEAL

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THE WEEK 275
THE NEED FOR TAKING THOUGHT *Thomas P. Neill* 278
COMMUNICATIONS 282
THE STAGE *Kappo Phelan* 287
THE SCREEN *Philip T. Hartung* 288
PORTRAITS AND PARABLES *Chester Kallman* 289
BOOKS OF THE WEEK 290
Wartime Mission in Spain—The Shelley Legend—Christine Roux—Essay on Rime—History of World War II—The War: Fifth Year—My Twenty-five Years in China—Encyclopedia of the Arts
A FEW, LAST MINUTE, HOLIDAY NOTIONS *Harry Lorin Binsse* 293

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Editors: EDWARD SKILLIN, JR.
PHILIP BURNHAM (*now on duty with the armed forces*)
HARRY LORIN BINSSE, *Managing Editor*; C. G. PAULDING, *Literary Editor*; JOHN C. CORT, *Associate Editor*: JOHN BRUBAKER, *Advertising Manager.*

China

OUR POLICY in China as enunciated by President Truman is eminently "correct," yet goes considerably further than old-fashioned correctness, since it was made perfectly clear that we will not consider financial assistance to that great country unless it at least begins to put its house in order. Our formula for this process likewise seems reasonable—at least on the surface. It takes cognizance of Chiang Kai-shek's association with non-democratic elements, it takes cognizance of communist insistence upon maintaining a separate party army and it takes cognizance of the existence of Chinese leaders independent both of Chiang and of the communists. It then proposes that these facts meld into the welsh rabbit of parliamentary institutions. The success of this program basically depends upon a psychological factor which it is very difficult if not impossible for an American to appraise. We are so used to political compromise as a principle of action for the sake of a workable degree of unity that we are inclined to assume that all reasonable men, the world over, accept the same principle. That is how we have so often been mistaken in our collective judgments of European politics, where nothing short of real calamity ever produces any spirit of genuine compromise, and where under normal circumstances the sort of compromise we take for granted is generally viewed as dishonest, dishonorable and degrading. This, by the way, is the main psychological explanation of the terrible proliferation of political parties so characteristic of normal European parliamentary régimes.

Does the Chinese mind work the same way? There is plenty of evidence that it does not, that it has much the same "practical" character as the Anglo-Saxon mind, that it accepts and understands the principle of compromise. If this is the case, General Marshall's task, though far from simple, is not impossible. If it is not the case, if that adherence to rigid principle which we are so likely to regard as sheer pigheadedness is characteristic of the Chinese, then General Marshall's task becomes purely symbolic and utterly hopeless.

Somewhat the same problem of psychology, though in far more complex form, lies at the root of the British problem in the Netherlands Indies. Here the present British government finds itself in a horribly embarrassing position. Supposedly it is playing the part of honest broker between the Dutch and the Indonesians. The primary condition upon which Britain insists is that tranquillity and order exist in the Indies. Yet to accomplish this, the British find themselves actively engaged in warfare with a Mohammedan people while everywhere else in the world they are doing everything they can to appease Mohammedan sensibilities, even to the extent of acting against personal convictions on the question of Palestine. At the same time there is genuine popular agitation in England to "get the boys home," which we should readily understand in this country when we consider that some of the boys, especially those in the Royal Navy, have been away from home for six years. Add into this plum pudding the somewhat mouldy fruit of Japanese machination, and the result is an unpalatable mess. If the Dutch Government and the Indonesian Nationalists are willing and able to work out a compromise, the situation can be saved from degenerating into a sheer attempt to preserve the old imperialist *status quo*.

But one thing is certain both with regard to our policy in China and British action in Indonesia. We cannot expect any happy result from our creation of Lidices in Manchuria or from British creation of Lidices in Java. Unhappily we have both been destroying villages for precisely the same reason as the Germans destroyed that now immortal village—because those villages in China and Indonesia refused to hand over, to us or the British, persons whom they viewed as having patriotically resisted foreign dominion. Wrong is wrong, whether it be committed by the Gestapo, the British Army or the United States Marines.

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GM Declares War

CONSUMERS in this country as a group have long been the most poorly represented, least informed and most indifferent socially of all national economic groups. Their representatives in Washington have never been able to compete with the well-paid lobbyists of business, farms and labor on anything like equal terms. Individually American consumers have developed little sales resistance to slick advertisements, the lure of instalment buying and other forms of intense sales pressure. How they have bought has had virtually nothing to do with the social consequences of their very act of buying. Only occasionally did an American company lose an appreciable number of sales because of shoddy articles or notorious labor policies. Despite union labels, the growing impact of consumers cooperatives and the continuance of certain purchasers' advisory services, the direct social influence of the American consumer as such has been negligible.

Is it possible that in coming months company policies toward their employees may play any major rôle in competition between industrial rivals? Certainly under the young Henry Ford the Ford Motor Company appears to be more conciliatory in these matter than General Motors. The effect of such a policy upon the buying public could conceivably be a prime consideration. Ford's wage offer to UAW is slightly higher than that of General Motors, and the back-and-forth discusion of provisions for union responsibility for continuous production seems to have been carried on in an atmosphere of considerably more friendliness. Thus far Ford has had little more practical success in coming to an agreement with the United Auto Workers than General Motors. But the terms of Ford's latest counter-proposals could at least provide some basis for further discussion of the matters in dispute.

It is not that negotiators for Ford have outdone themselves to be accommodating. Rather that General Motors is unbelievably tough. Now that the GM contract with its workers is terminated and GM plants are struck, the company wants to turn back the clock. It reacts to the situation like nothing so much as an extremely irate individual. Its current demands seem designed to make the union realize how generous the expired contract really was; the workers should have known when they were well off. Now they will jolly well find out.

GM now insists that the union surrender the maintenance of membership provision which it obtained in 1942 with the help of the NLRB; also that the union pay half the salaries of the men on hundreds of grievance committees (who were not hitherto on union payrolls). Penalties to be exacted for instigating and participating in strikes are to include loss of seniority. The company emphatically insists that only wages, hours and working conditions comprise proper subjects for union negotiation. It is difficult to conceive of an attitude which is more behind the times or more hostile. About the only thing on which GM seems to concur with the Auto Workers is diffidence toward President Truman's "fact finders," who are commencing operations as we go to press.

To revert to the consumer. Perhaps what GM executives most resent is the insistence of the Auto Workers that wage raises must not serve as a basis for increases in the price of new cars. At the very least this must be counted as an indication of the union's farsightedness; if higher wages and higher prices go hand in hand, the worker gains nothing. In fact he actually loses if the country succumbs to any major inflation spiral. Possibly at long last the American consumer has found a powerful ally. The logic of the union's concern over both wages and prices is indisputable. Equally indisputable is the shortsighted if not vindictive character of current General Motors policy.

Spain

ONE trouble is that the presence of Franco in Spain conceals the presence in Spain of the Spanish people—the memory of what he has done comes between us and them. This winter, as for so many long winters of the past years, the Spanish people are hungry and poor (the road is the same road over the windswept mountains) but we do not see the villages, the towns, the roads, we do not feel the cold; the régime stands between us and the people.

Franco deprived Spain of freedom; he cut Spain in half; he has made it most difficult for Spain ever to be whole again—and now with the war over he sits there in Madrid and we all look at him, wishing he would disappear, preoccupied with him and with his régime, playing with one idea after another in search of a method by which he can be persuaded or forced to disappear. But no technique for foreign intervention has yet been discovered that takes into account the people of Spain. Because everything that has been thought of is punitive; the only pressures that can affect Franco punish first the Spanish people.

When you talk about breaking off all relations with Spain until Franco has departed, you mean nothing at all, or else that a certain number of Spanish workmen will be out of work, a certain number of Spanish women and children will have a certain amount less to eat until he has gone. And when you recognize the government in exile, what does that mean unless you propose to put it on a boat and sail it back to Spain, and how can

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you be sure that the government's arrival will not find another government still functioning in Spain and therefore another civil war?

The French, the British, the American governments want Franco to go. Perhaps they most want him to go because so far they have failed to get anything else they wanted; they have not solved anything else and so it would cheer them up—and us—if they could establish democracy in Spain or at any rate get rid of the Spanish dictator. This preoccupation of theirs is natural—and that we share it has long been evident. They, and we, feel that way also about Mr. Perón in Argentina. But until the peoples of the world can share in world government, the separate nations remain despairingly separated and the problem of intervention remains as difficult as before the war.

Apprentices Again

ON ANOTHER page of this issue of THE COMMONWEAL appears a letter from one of our readers ("Building Boom Illusion," page 283) which gives expression to the usually accepted belief with regard to apprentices in the building trades. Our correspondent blames the present lack of trained mechanics in the building trades upon the monopolistic policies of these AFL unions. Of course he is to a certain degree correct, since the unions have long clung to the notion that a scarcity of mechanics ensures a high wage rate. But the situation really cuts deeper—far deeper—than a matter of trade union policy.

The fact is that the United States has, from the very beginning, existed on the basis of its common labor being done by immigrants and its skilled trades—outside of factories—being constantly replenished by immigrants who have served their apprenticeships in other countries. Of course there have always been exceptions to the rule, but generally speaking native-born Americans have sought to avoid what is commonly regarded as manual work and have preferred occupations which are symbolically middle class. It is a commonplace to all of us that our railroads were built by the Irish and the Chinese, on the Atlantic and Pacific coasts respectively. But do we find the descendants of these Irish earning their living by means of picks and shovels? They, like all the successive groups of immigrants who followed them, have bettered themselves—or at least sought to better themselves—and in doing this they have moved away from manual labor. This is a basic pattern of American life. The result is notable at the moment because we are actually confronted with a real shortage of common and craft labor, while millions of veterans hesitate on the edge of the labor market, or are plunged in it, with little prospect of immediate employment. In some parts of the country common laborers are able to command wages as high as ten dollars a day.

We are forced to conclude that the situation would not be radically different even if the AFL building trades unions had pursued a far more liberal apprenticeship program. It is at least doubtful whether Americans have ever particularly wanted to earn their livings as carpenters or plasterers or painters, let alone as common laborers. They have been far more attracted by the mechanical trades, by jobs which can generally be designated as white collar or professional. At the same time Americans generally have favored tight restrictions on immigration, and the circumstances of the last five or six years have substantially eliminated even what immigration might have been possible under the law. The result is an acute shortage of labor in certain categories while the labor market in general is loosening up more and more daily. To put it in exaggerated language, Americans have been to a large extent parasites upon immigrant labor; the host is now greatly reduced in size and the parasite is beginning to be discomfited thereby.

This is not written in disparagement of the laudable American desire for self-betterment, but rather as a description of a situation very little noticed even by professional social analysts. It seem plain that the alternative which confronts us is a choice between once again opening our doors to workers from abroad or deliberately re-orientating our national standards, so that manual labor will be viewed as a perfectly acceptable career—and will, at all its levels, be remunerated accordingly.

UNRRA Can Go On

AFTER an unconscionable delay the Congress finally approved the continuation of American participation in UNRRA's activities for another year and voted the required appropriation for the contribution of the United States. Some of the Senators declared that they had voted with reluctance and only because the situation left them no alternative. The plight of the European and other war victims has been greatly aggravated by this delay; yet all Americans genuinely concerned in the matter are intensely gratified that approval has come at last. Resumption by UNRRA of full-scale relief and rehabilitation work will not remove the need for relief by private agencies or the sending of personal food packages overseas. But once the lost time has been made up and the requisite supplies amassed, the United Nations agency will provide a solid foundation for essential private activities. The belated action of the Senate provides one encouraging note as the year 1945 draws to a troubled close.

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The Need for Taking Thought

How to think on a barrel of dynamite

Thomas P. Neill

INTELLIGENT MEN everywhere agree that these are the most crucial days in history. In their recent statement on world conditions the bishops of this country called it "the greatest crisis of human history." Scientists talk in terms of 40,000,000 persons obliterated during the first night of the next war, of Detroit, Pittsburgh, Washington, New York, Boston and Chicago turning to radio-active rubble in a few hours.

Yet most people seem not to realize in full measure the dreadful possibilities before us. Congressmen mostly think in the old formulas. One senator sagely observed to the atomic scientists' lobby: "I'm not sold on atomic energy." Nothing to fear, apparently, until atoms get the vote. Despite the senator, we cannot dodge the conclusion that we are sitting on a barrel of dynamite, that there are several fuses attached to the keg and they are burning shorter by the hour. There is no doubt, either, that we who sit on the barrel of dynamite are hopelessly confused.

The senator is proof of that. So is Canada's deputy minister of Health and Welfare, General Chisholm, who insists that in the atomic age it will be wrong to believe in Santa Claus. "Any child who believes in Santa Claus," he profoundly concludes, "has had his ability to think permanently destroyed." Professor Ivan McDougle urged parents to "substitute democratic philosophy" for "the Santa Claus myth."

This is not an attempt to terrorize you. Nor is it intended as an overstatement of the case to excite you to immediate action. It is a simple statement of fact, which has its bright side too, for it offers the alternative of a better world or utter desolation. But it must be a much better world, or, for most of us, it will be no world at all. The old compromises are obsolete. The American Association for the United Nations put it simply: "We are faced with the alternative of a warless world or total destruction." A warless world, with atomic energy promoting man's welfare in countless ways, will be a better world than we have known. We are offered the clear-cut alternatives of a better life or destruction. There is no third choice.

Various plans for world government, various schemes for controlling atomic energy, various institutions for preserving peace have been proposed and they are now discussed everywhere. But it is important to remember that, while these plans and institutions are necessary, they cannot of themselves bring peace. We have seen how meaningless it is to outlaw war and then believe it abolished; we have seen how meaningless the San Francisco Charter already threatens to become. We do not so much require revolutionary institutions and techniques—necessary as they are—as we do a revolution in men's minds and spirits, in men's thought and their morality. Good formulas can put off the outbreak of war, but without the revolution in men's minds and wills they can do no more.

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A man sitting on a barrel of dynamite—and we are sentenced to live there from this time forward, because atomic energy and its possible use in war are with us to stay—should set about doing two things. First of all, he should put out the fuses that are burning. This is his immediate task. Then he should devise methods for neutralizing the contents of the barrel so as to prevent explosions in the future. If he fails in this latter task he will be forever extinguishing fuses—and some day he will miss one. Like the man on the barrel of dynamite, we would do well to consider ourselves faced with two distinct tasks: (1) avoiding war and the steps that lead to war these next few months and years; (2) doing some intense thinking on fundamentals for the purpose of planned, rational action in the future on which permanent peace can be based.

Both problems are vitally important. If we do not avoid war for the next few years, there is not much point to thinking about permanent peace in the future; but if we only elude war from month to month without getting down to fundamental solutions, we shall not get peace. We shall make our first—and our last—mistake some time or another. Generally speaking, people who think at all today are thinking about the first of these problems, and it is well that they should. But it is vitally important not to forget about the other.

If we honestly examine ourselves, I think we must conclude that as yet we do not *really* want peace. At least we do not have what economists

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would term an effective demand for it. We are not willing to pay the price it costs. On the other hand, we do not want war—not formally declared war with its rationing, its high demands in time, money and life. We want the thrills and chills, the fun and excitement of war, without its suffering and its privation. But in the next war, let us remember, we shall all be defenseless targets. Only a few button-pushers will get thrills and chills.

So we do not want formally declared war. But we want all those things which lead to war and which are incompatible with true peace. We will not pay the high price at which peace is pegged. We grumble about sending food to wretched, starving Europeans. It is hard to expect much from the future when we demanded an end of rationing in this country before allowing food freely to go abroad. General Motors will not pay the price demanded for industrial peace; neither will the unions. Both prefer industrial war.

Peace is harder to put up with than war. Peace means self-control, by individuals, by classes and by nations. It means facing and solving problems and resolving disputes without losing temper. It means honesty with one's self; it means seeing the other fellow's side of the argument. It means rational control and objective thinking. And all of that is hard on men. War, on the other hand, is so easy, both for individuals and for nations. For war is the easy way out of any problem; it is the resort to force instead of reason. War is a way of gratifying the animal in us, of glorifying the romantic in us, whereas peace demands sacrifice in denying the animal instinct of swinging instead of thinking, in denying the appetite for material things, in making concessions and offering compromises.

If we hope to avoid war in the future we must be willing to pay the price that peace will cost us. We must be willing to sacrifice for peace as we sacrificed for victory. Perhaps the atomic bomb will serve the useful purpose of offering us so clear a dichotomy between peace and war that we shall ultimately be willing to make heavy sacrifices to avoid atomic war. We sacrificed for victory because we knew the cost of defeat; now it is possible that we can appreciate the cost even of victory in the next war. We can conclude, I believe, that there are millions of Europeans who are willing to pay whatever price peace may cost; there are hundreds of thousands in this country too who are willing to pay a heavy price for peace. Perhaps—only perhaps—peace is coming to be more attractive; perhaps we shall be willing to pay for it and we are ready to ask what we must do to earn it.

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We must, in the first place, think rationally and objectively. The modern mind, remember, is obsolete. It was obsolete before the atomic bomb fell on Hiroshima, but it has become antique since then. The modern mind does not really think; it feels instead. It refuses to be objective; it feels what it wants to. The Nuremberg trials are proof of this. German war criminals are being tried for, among other things, crimes against humanity and crimes against peace. We do not say that these are not crimes and that, ideally, they should not be punishable under law. But if the nazis are guilty of crimes against humanity, what about the Americans who deliberately planned, made and used atomic bombs? If the Germans violated the Hague Convention, what did we do with terror-bombing in Europe and atomic bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki? If the Germans are guilty of crimes against humanity, what about factories in Detroit where Negro workers are not provided with blowers to carry off carborundum dust while white workers are? If the nazis are guilty of violating human rights and human dignity, what about our California sterilization laws which are even blunter than nazi laws? If the nazis are racialist, what about most Catholics and Protestants here, who are "moderate racists"? We can honestly and objectively condemn the nazis only for failure—unless we are willing to do some self-accusing at the same time.

Our modern mind has two codes of morality. Let's be frank about it. American and Russian soldiers are allowed to do what nazis are justly being shot for. No Frenchmen have been indicted for mistreatment of German prisoners of war, but the whole world knows that some of them are guilty. No Russians are haled before courts for crimes against humanity on the same level as those of the nazis. No accusations are placed against the French or the Dutch or the English or the Americans in India, China and Java for what is going on in those places today. We have two standards of domestic morality too. No capitalist can condemn unions unless he condemns his brother capitalists in the same breath for the same crimes; no laborer can condemn the capitalist unless he condemns labor too. Ideologically, there are two codes of morality. Liberals condemn Franco for things that Stalin has done more successfully and ferociously; conservatives condemn Stalin while whitewashing Franco and extenuating Mussolini.

There can be no peace when there is such sloppy thinking in the world. As an absolute precondition of peace, we must get back to objective thinking. We must get out of Kant's and Dewey's phenomenaland and back to reality. We must put an end to wishful thinking and admit objective relationships and therefore objective right and wrong. We must admit that some things are

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right, whether Stalin or Byrnes does them, that some things are wrong, whether the nazis do them or we. This requires strong effort on our part, but once done it is not a hard habit to acquire. You must be as ready to condemn an American soldier who shoots a prisoner of war as you are a Japanese. Then you are thinking objectively.

More than this, we have to think, as it were, from scratch. Too long has our thinking been cluttered up by old notions whose validity has not been questioned for ages. We think in these terms because it is the "democratic thing to do"; we do it because everyone else does it. And we must stop that, if we want to get anywhere. We must remember that it is quite possible for the majority to be wrong, that it is possible—even quite probable in this day—for no one else to be right. We must start thinking from scratch about such things as "property rights" and "sovereignty" and "natural limits" to state authority. We must all be like the healthy little child in Hans Christian Andersen's tale of the king's new suit. The tailors, you will remember, sold the king a suit, which, they told him, could not be seen by liars. The king was afraid to complain when he failed to see his "new suit"; everyone else was afraid to say he saw the king in his shorts when he walked forth in his "new suit," until a little child asked his mother, in a loud voice, why the king was walking around without any pants on. Thus was the tailors' fraud exposed. Thus must many current intellectual frauds be exposed if we would have peace.

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In the next place, there must be a moral revolution if we truly will peace on earth to all men. This is so drastic a revolution that it can hardly be looked for in its fullness—but it must be striven for and accomplished in large part. The only complete revolutionist in history was Christ; except for certain of His followers, everyone else stopped far short of the goals He pointed out in His revolutionary teaching. And in the past many of His followers could afford to follow Christ only part of the way. But we can't today. Either we have good morality, or we have atomic chaos and atomic war.

The basic points of the Christian tradition on man's nature, his value and his dignity must be reasserted and acted upon. We must believe that man—Japanese and Negroes too—is rational, that he is more than a high-grade animal; we must reject the nonsense of Harvard's William McDougall and Germany's Oswald Spengler, both of whom told us we were only highly organized animals. We must believe that man has free will; the nonsense of determinism, whether biological or environmental, must be rejected. Only by accepting man with reason and with free will can we have responsible human beings whom we can logically hold to account for their free actions.

We must reassert the true worth of man the human being. Americans like to delude themselves with the belief that they value human life highly. We reckon it cheaply because we reckon it in terms of money as a rule, and only give it a somewhat higher monetary valuation than do other peoples. The lack of protective devices in factories is eloquent proof of that; the century-long struggle to obtain what meager protection that has been grudgingly conceded is further proof of the point, as is the unending struggle to obtain decent housing conditions and a living wage. We must act on the evaluation of human life that makes the worst drunk in town of inestimably greater value than the entire war debt. This seems a hard saying, but it is true, and we must act on it. Human beings can properly be reckoned only in terms of like coinage—other human beings.

Only when we allow human beings their true worth and their true dignity, only when we concede man his mind and his free will, can we build a society of human persons who possess human rights and who owe each other respect and reciprocal duties. Only then can we sensibly address ourselves to the problem of creating institutions to control and regulate, to aid and protect these human persons who are neither angels nor apes. Only when we have revolutionized our thinking and our morality can we consistently and effectively attack the more concrete problems of peace.

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After this revolution in thought and in morality, we can turn more hopefully to such a problem as that of a nation's "giving up its sovereignty." This sovereignty, the retention of which so many people seem to think is a matter of national honor and integrity, is essentially a pagan thing. States are limited, by right at least, from all directions. They are limited from below by the rights of individual human beings and of families; they are limited from the side by the rights of such organizations as the church and the school; they are limited from above by the rights of society taken as a whole, whether it be organized in a world state or not, and by God.

Sovereignty, as a matter of fact, is a concept of the horse-and-buggy day. It is obsolete today. To speak of the sovereignty of small states is to speak nonsense; for, no matter what might be said in treaties, they are dependent on neighboring large states for their very existence. Even to talk of the unlimited sovereignty of this country or of Russia is to talk nonsense. Apart from moral limitations, there are very real and very practical limits upon the freedom of action of either country. The term "sovereignty" has too

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long clogged up our thinking apparatus; it is time to get back of the term to the reality of what powers are possesssed and what powers should be possessed by the state. Then it will be possible to decide which powers are to be surrendered and what additional ones must be secured.

So it is with the matter of a United Nations Organization, or a world state. Most people who talk about the matter somehow imply that national states were divinely ordained and that they have a right to perpetual existence. It is true that society is natural and the state is necessary, but it is not true that national lines are "natural," divinely appointed lines of division between states. The national state, *per se,* has no more right to perpetual existence than did the city-state of ancient Greece. If it fails to perform its function of providing for the welfare of its citizens—and it must avoid war in the future to do this—it must give way to another form of organization. If there is no other way of abolishing war than by destroying national states, then they have no right to life.

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What is there about a possible world state so to terrify us? Is it the possibility of a "lot of foreigners" having something to say about our destiny? If so, we should remember they will have much to say anyway, and it is better that they talk things over with us than drop bombs on us. Is it the size of a possible world state? That, in itself, should be no concern, for the smallest state is too big for an individual to challenge to battle today. Those who believe in the brotherhood of man, those who are not at bottom racist in their thinking, would be inclined to look upon some kind of world state as more natural than the arbitrary collections of humanity constituting states today. The oneness of humankind would almost seem to argue for one ultimate, supreme legal and political authority.

This, in itself, does not pretend to be an argument for a United Nations or a stronger world state—reasonable as such a state seems to me. It is only an argument that the case for or against a world state must be examined anew. It should not be beclouded by concepts and prejudices no longer valid.

So it is with the question of how to treat Germans. What sort of peace should be imposed on the defeated enemy? Even the Germans, we must remember, are human beings who have the right to a decent human existence. Vindictive justice can be demanded of them, and safeguards to prevent their starting another war can be erected; it is well to remember, however, that safeguards must also be erected against ourselves and the man next door, and that vindictive justice should be exacted from us in the same proportion to our guilt—and we are all guilty to some degree—as from the Germans. No matter what penalties are imposed, the Germans must be given the opportunity to live like human beings again, culturally, politically and economically. They must be given the opportunity to regain their self-respect and an honorable place among the peoples of the world. Otherwise we shall do them injustice and we shall take the first step in causing another war.

Until all the facts on the origin and the conduct of the war are given to us, and until we know what sort of United Nations Organization we shall have, we cannot decide intelligently just how to deal with the defeated group. But we can clear away much nonsense that is now passing for rational thought. To say that the Germans are *naturally* warlike is to say that nazi racism was right; to condemn the Junker military class is to condemn the American Navy for what it has tried and not quite succeeded in doing; to condemn the German General Staff for "plotting against peace" is to condemn military staffs in all countries, ours included. Again, objectivity of thought is necessary for intelligent dealing with the defeated powers.

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It would be nice to think that durable peace could more easily be achieved than by a revolution in men's minds and hearts—but one must play ostrich to think so. It would be nice to think that we could outlaw war and then be certain there will be no more war—but it is nonsense to believe that. It would be nice to think that men can remain as they are and that peace can be found through a formula of some sort—but that is impossible. The only practical solution is one that works, one that will prevent war. And that must be a revolution in morals and spirit. "Otherwise," states the report of the Post-War World Committee of the Catholic Association for International Peace, "the two world wars and the worldwide depression of the thirties will be as mere pin-pricks compared with the abysmal desolation of the future."

All these problems ultimately resolve themselves into moral problems to be solved by rational action. One of the prerequisites for international peace listed by the present Pope was mutual trust and goodwill. Most commentators were disappointed at the "vagueness" of his statement—but what, if it is not mutual suspicion and ill-will, is the basic difficulty between this country and Russia? The atomic bomb has terrified us and paralyzed our minds. But it can—perhaps—have accomplished the good result of so shaking us that we are better prepared to think things through afresh. Perhaps it has shaken a lot of cobwebs out of our brains. And maybe it has

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even made us realize that in the atomic age the Sermon on the Mount becomes the most pragmatic advice in the world. In the atomic age it seems that morality has become utilitarian. We must come to realize that we are entering a curious age when we can save our individual necks, and the collective neck of civilization, only by being good.

Communications

THE RETURNING SOLDIER

Miyakonojo, Kyushu, Japan.

TO the Editors: It was not until yesterday that I received THE COMMONWEAL of September 29 which a considerate friend, who is well aware of my attachment to the magazine and its general policies, forwarded to me. Mr. C. G. Paulding's "The Returning Soldier" said what I have long felt and wanted to say about the men of the armed forces, both returning from and occupying various sections of the war-torn world. The article is typical of Mr. Paulding; and I would like to congratulate him on performing a task well done and long awaited for which he most probably will receive the reward of no slight derision along with a litany of names.

Since I have had limited contact with men returning from the European theater prior to my being sent into the Pacific theater, my awareness of the uninspiring and sickly situation between our armed forces and the native populations of Allied Powers on the whole has been gleaned from letters received from men serving in England, France and Italy, as well as from close friends of mine stationed in that theater of operations. A number of these bemoaned the same facts Mr. Paulding pointed out, and lamented the possibility that we as a nation might expect to reap unfortunate fruit as a result of this two-way deprecation.

Granted that in a sense our situation here is somewhat different (Japan not having been our ally) nevertheless the men of the services are doing very little to speak of by their actions and attitudes to convince the Japanese that we are part of a civilization which is supposedly Christian and which is worthy of their or any other nation's embrace.

While in the Nagasaki area, where destruction has had few parallels in this war, I noted the same sort of obvious discontent with what there was to offer to the service men performing occupational duties mentioned in Mr. Paulding's article—a discontent totally ignoring the fact that everything was in ruins, war-torn and weary, unable to provide bare living necessities for the populace involved, much less merry-go-round assortment of novelties required by entertainment-bent troops. To no small extent, unlike our allies and enemies in this conflict, we have spoiled a definite and greater portion of our troops with too much attention and special entertainment resulting in the verification of the adage, "Give him a hand and he will ask for your whole arm."

Not infrequently during the past three years I, too—who have had the Hundred Great Books "hurled" at me not by Chancellor Hutchins but by President Stringfellow Barr and Dean Scott Buchanan of St. John's (really "hurled" does not apply in our case)—have wished that those around me on every side, the men who in time will have to make America's future destiny worth all that we have put out for it, had, or in time would become acquainted with the men of the past through their works, on which willy-nilly we have relied so heavily. I might add relied "unwittingly" so frequently. For so many patent reasons, most of which are attributable to our educational system and the academic strain now so ingrained into our so-called college men, the necessity of Mr. Paulding's proposed "hurl" and my wish would be realized only with the greatest patient persuasion and after long and ridiculous discussion, provided one could get some to consider this new(?) proposal.

Judging from what goes on about me from day to day, to Mr. Christopher Morley's "The Laws of War" in the same issue, I cannot but add my own "How true, How true!" A. LEONARD SLAFKOSKY.

CHICHERIN

New York, N. Y.

TO the Editors: In THE COMMONWEAL for December 14, 1945, I find a very strange statement by William Franklin Sands that Foreign Commissar Chicherin "was not even mildly interested in the Russian revolution, in Marxian communism or in the Bolshevik Communist Party." I several times had opportunities to have long talks with Foreign Commissar Chicherin, both during my stay in Moscow for one and half years as a foreign correspondent and when Chicherin was taking the waters of Wiesbaden (Germany). Chicherin's favorite topics were precisely questions of Marxian ideology, especially the differing developments of Marxism in Germany and in Russia. I remember especially well one long discussion about the German Social Democrat, politician and writer, August Bebel. Provoked by my remark that Bebel's books were pseudoscientific, Chicherin tried to convince me that he was a profound thinker. Chicherin did so at great length and in a way that showed a great familiarity with the writings of Bebel as well as of Marx, Engel, Kautsky, and Lenin.

From these experiences I am convinced that Mr. Sands's statement is very far away from the facts. Chicherin was certainly not an orthodox Bolshevik and this attitude made it easy to the place-hunter Litvinov to plot against his superior and to have him thrown out of office. But Chicherin believed very sincerely in the twilight of capitalism and in the shaping of the world according to the conception of Marxian socialism. He gave more thought to these problems than did many of Lenin's blind followers—he was very ill at ease about OGPU measures, because they smelled to him like a continuation of Czarist methods and not in accordance with his dreams of socialism. I think he had the unfortunately erroneous conception that the system of terror would isolate Russia while a policy of enlightened social democracy might win the sympathies of the world for the Soviet Union. I am sure if some day the personal papers of Chicherin are published, they will give evi-

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dence that he had not "a one-track mind," as Mr. Sands tells us, but was one of the most complex characters among the first generation of Soviet statesmen. Some people believe he was a Trotskyist, but this also is an oversimplification of this lonely and restrained personality. He was a nobleman who had approached Marxism out of an idealistic desire for a better world and he was often disillusioned that Soviet life proved so different from the socialism he had dreamed of. Thus his mild irony turned into sarcasm; he no longer cared for his life and in spite of his diabetes he comforted himself with vodka and the good old French cognacs his friends "from the other side of the class barricade" continued to send him even after his fall. His bitterness was certainly not that of a man who was not concerned over internal policy and had been enrolled as a party member nearly against his will, but rather that of a gentleman who had hoped that all men might become gentlemen, but suddenly discovered that the new order was as brutal and as filthy as had been the old. If Mr. Sands's statement is based on personal knowledge of Commissar Chicherin, I am forced to doubt his human insight.

MAX FISCHER.

ATTITUDES TOWARD THE REVOLUTION

Philadelphia, Pa.

TO the Editors: Somewhat belatedly I have read Nicholas Berdyaev's article "Attitudes Toward the Revolution" which appeared in your September 28 issue. Leaving aside his rather literal application of the Hegelian dialectical method to the analysis of recent Russian history with results that are, to say the least, somewhat doubtful, this writer would like to differ with the author as to his analysis of the attitudes of the Russian exiles abroad, particularly with respect to what Mr. Berdyaev says regarding those whom he calls "inspired by Anglo-American internationalism."

One cannot but come under the impression that Mr. Berdyaev holds to the opinion that once a Russian always a Russian and that to him, despite what he says in the last part of his article, the fact of being born in a given country results in ties that cannot be severed during the lifetime of the person concerned. Here in America a very large part of those who had left Russia and came to live here have become sincerely attached not to what Mr. Berdyaev chooses to call the Anglo-American internationalism but to the United States and the ideals America stands for. This group may not be as vocal as some of the others; nevertheless, numerically it is quite important, and includes some of the best elements amongst the ex-Russian exiles who have become citizens of the United States. These do not regard themselves as Russian-Americans or any kind of hyphenated Americans but as Americans, pure and simple.

In this group will be found quite a few people who, contrary to what Mr. Berdyaev says in the second paragraph of his article, continued to study carefully the process of change in Soviet Russia with objectivity and detachment, somewhat unusual in the history of political emigration. I am certain that at least some in this group are quite proud of what Mr. Berdyaev calls their doctrinaire attachment to the principles of democracy and what they believe to be a passionate belief in the principles and practice of democracy.

D. FEDOTOFF WHITE.

NEGRO GI IN SWITZERLAND

Zurich, Switzerland.

TO the Editors: It may interest you to know that Switzerland, too, has a color problem since the arrival of so many colored GI's who are spending a week's leave in this small country where there are four different races but no minorities. Here is how Switzerland handles the Negro problem. I mention this one case in illustration of what is taking place daily and in all parts of the country.

Scene: a street corner in the town of Lucerne, one Sunday afternoon. A towering Negro GI is surrounded by four little Swiss boys. I notice that the two parties have some trouble in making themselves understood the GI and an eight-year-old boy knowing in common but a few words of Italian. The boys appeal to me to act as interpreter. They want me to tell this very dark soldier from Washington, D. C., that they would like him to come home with them for supper, that their parents gave them permission to bring home one of those lonesome colored GI's, that they had already enjoyed the visits of several.

All this I explained to the boy from Eighth Street, S.W., and I well understood his reluctance to believe in such miracles. Finally I convinced him that such things are not at all unusual in Switzerland. My heart took a leap when I saw these neat little boys, two on each side, take hold of the big GI's hands and arms and walk happily toward their home. The emotions mirrored in this man's face need not be described: to him it was a revelation of an unknown life that could be possible if his white co-citizens had the hearts of these four little Swiss boys.

A. HAETTENSCHWILLER.

BUILDING BOOM ILLUSION

Detroit, Mich.

TO the Editors: In your September 7 issue Mr. Harry Lorin Binsse, in his article, "Building Boom Illusion," cites as the major reason for the present great uncertainty in the building industry a dearth of construction workers owing to the absence of a sound apprenticeship program. It is a well known fact, not brought out in Mr. Binsse's article, that the AFL building trades unions did years ago arrogate to themselves full responsibility for any apprenticeship training program. The underlying motive behind all apprenticeship programs of the building trades unions is to perpetuate a scarcity of building trades workers. Most AFL building trades unions arrange initiation fees at prohibitive figures, and in addition, they establish union examination boards who admit new members to the union at their caprice, the primary concern of these union examiners being to keep as few apprentices from entering the union as possible.

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Forty years of these monopolistic AFL building trades union tactics has developed the present crisis complained of by Mr. Binsse. Mr. Binsse gives as his summation of the 1940 situation, "The apprenticeship situation in the New York building trades is not only socially bad; it is chaotic. If such a situation existed in all departments of American industry, it would seriously threaten our future as an industrial nation."

It is worse today because many of the AFL building trades unions have always constituted nothing but rules in restraint of trade. When industry and business established rules and practices in restraint of trade, laws were enacted to protect the public by outlawing such practices. Proper legislation to establish state boards of examiners with further legislation providing for reasonable initiation fees for admission into the building trade unions is the solution.

JOHN F. MILLIGAN.

WHAT FUTURE FOR FRANCE'S CHILDREN?

Written in France.

TO the Editors: The Rhone rolls at my feet as I stand where Caesar's Legions trod more than two milleniums ago and survey the 24 great bridges that have been destroyed in Lyon, leaving only three standing. For two days, I have visited the schools in this city and tried to say some words of cheer as I went from class to class and looked into wan but eager little faces. Most of them were dirty, for there is no soap. Nearly all of the children wore frightfully old clothing and much of it was ragged. You ask why their mothers do not mend it? They have, until it falls apart. Then, there are few needles here and when thread can be bought it is so weak as to be almost worthless. Worst of all were the shoes or lack of them. There were a few leather shoes, quite ragged, more cloth or felt slippers and still more wooden-soled sandals or wooden-soled shoes with cloth or paper uppers. This clumsy footwear is not only injurious to feet but extremely uncomfortable and offers but little protection from cold.

Over and over I was asked to tell the American people that the greatest need was shoes: shoes of all kinds, new and old, for boys, girls, men and women. The American commanding officer of this region emphasized that even very old shoes, as long as there was a scrap of good leather in the uppers, were useful and should be sent. They will be repaired and used or the scraps of good leather in them will be used to repair other shoes or to make sandals. Many of the teachers told me today that when bad weather comes most of the children will have to stay at home. I could see the proof of it as it is quite obvious that children cannot wade through snow with sandals or cloth slippers.

All day I heard teachers say that the children could not concentrate for more than a few minutes at a time. Their memory is poor. They learn but little and forget most of it the next day. I wish that those who would not let us feed them during the occupation had been forced to accompany me the past two days. I wish they would think about the heavy burden that these subnormal children will have to bear. To reconstruct Europe is perhaps the greatest moral and physical task that modern men have faced and the heaviest load will fall upon the generation least able to carry it. And yet the fate of democracy must be entrusted to these undersized and weakened children. One principal told me that the physical development of his children had been retarded about one year and their mental development about two years. The listless faces of the children and their thin pinched bodies proved he was not exaggerating.

It is the same story in the schools of Paris and in fact in all the cities and non-food producing areas of France. Only those with money enough to patronize the black market have been able to preserve the well-being of their children. How few these are may be guessed when I tell you that coal is $90 to $120 a ton, eggs 40 cents each, chicken $5 a pound, sugar $2.30 a pound, and butter $4.50 a pound. A dress costs $400 to $600, a suit or overcoat about the same amount and a pair of shoes about $140. I have talked to people who have bought all of these things and have paid these prices.

Space fails to tell of the nightmare of destruction, mine fields, barbed wire, stakes to prevent airplanes landing, and wreckage of property and humanity that was Normandy and Brittany. That is a story by itself.

I would like to thank my fellow-countrymen and our Canadian neighbors for the enormous quantities of wheat they are sending to Europe. It has saved the countries I have visited from complete catastrophe. Without it there would have been famine.

HOWARD E. KERSHNER,
Save the Children Federation,
1 Madison Avenue.

BOUQUET

Arlington, Va.

TO the Editors: Too many times, after reading my then current issue of THE COMMONWEAL, I have felt that as a matter of common Christian duty I should write and tell you what a good job you are doing through your journal. I know other readers of THE COMMONWEAL who feel approximately the same way (and none who don't), and I have hoped that some of them would write you expressing the thoughts I should like to express, but with greater eloquence and precision, and thereby enable me to console myself on the theory that they have done my duty well. But, like myself, they're reasonably busy most of the time; and when not busy, like myself, they're reasonably lazy. On those few occasions when they are neither busy nor lazy they are confronted with the same problem that now confronts me—the arduous task of composition.

Since I've already remitted for a renewal of my subscription (plus a couple of gift subs.), the fulfillment of a duty is my justification for writing. You've earned the right, not alone to know, but to be told that your work is effective in carrying on the good fight. More important perhaps, it inspires others to carry on. When I consider how easily most of us become discouraged, it

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occurs to me that, amidst the torrent of brick-bats and dead-cats which your articles should provoke, some of you may sometimes wonder whether it's really worth the effort. I should like to assure you that it really is. THE COMMONWEAL becomes increasingly indispensable.

So many commendable things appear in its pages that I hesitate to particularize lest I appear to slight matters no less worthy of specific praise. Yet, I should guess you are sufficiently interested in reader reaction for me to hazard my comments even without the foregoing qualifications. So, in the light of the urgent problems confronting our democracy, I should like to identify as specially meritorious the recent articles by Fathers Higgins and Dunne. We need more of the same. Let there be no misunderstanding, I should applaud their work even if they—or I—had less melodious names.

EDWARD W. KELLY.

LIBERAL AND LIBERALISM

Brooklyn, N. Y.

TO the Editors: The meaning of the words *liberal* and *liberalism* is very different, depends whether they are used by a Catholic writer or a writer who does not think along Catholic lines. It is therefore necessary, from time to time, to clarify the controversies and to avoid occasion for misunderstandings.

The word *liberal* was first used in Spain at the beginning of the last century when those who asked Ferdinand VII to restore the constitution of 1812 were called "liberals" (citizens loving liberty) while their opponents were called "servil" (subjects). The word was then adopted in Italy where those favoring the constitutional system and Italy's independence from Austrian rule were called "liberals" and the faithful supporters of the absolute rulers (kings and princes) were called "codini" (short-tails—reactionaries), because the Italian Courts of the Holy Alliance restored the dress of the eighteenth century, as it had been before the French Revolution.

An Italian satirist and poet, Giuseppe Giusti, wrote:

> A battesimo suoni o a funerale
> Muore un codino e nasce un liberale.
>
> (When the bell rings for baptism or funeral
> It's the death of a reactionary ["short-tail"] or the birth of a liberal.)

At the same time the words *liberal* and *liberalism* were adopted in Great Britain and France to indicate primarily the economic liberty of the Manchester School. The Whigs called themselves liberals to denote also their progressive political platform.

Many Catholics of the time opposed liberalism because they feared the political liberties of the constitutional system; they were real reactionaries. Today we call them authoritarians to distinguish them from the totalitarians who supported and helped Mussolini, Franco, and Pétain.

The Church condemned theoretical "liberalism" because of its fundamental error—that of a kind of naturalism derived from the philosophy of the French Encyclopedists.

Time passed, the original political liberalism, independent of any actual involvement with this or that philosophy, triumphed as a constitutional system of a State based on political liberties and free of ecclesiastical supervision, while the naturalist philosophies, spreading independently of political and economic liberalism, have been the basis of such illiberal systems as totalitarianism, state worship, race or class supremacy—like Hitler's or Lenin's.

The history of a word is often the history of the human process. Thus we now have this peculiarity: a liberal for some Catholics is still a person who professes that liberalism condemned by the Church; in its general use it is applied to broad-minded people; in the United States it generally refers to progressive people in every field; in politics it is used for people who are Leftist. In Italy liberals are quite conservative, a bourgeois party of the Right. In England liberals are the free traders; no one in France wants to be called a liberal, but not because of ecclesiastical reasons.

Fortunately, the word is still common in all parts of the world as applied to "liberal arts and professions," a very ancient qualification that still endures despite the quite recent intrusion of "liberal" in politics.

LUIGI STURZO.

LONGO

Jersey City, N. J.

TO the Editors: I certainly am not undertaking the office of cheer leader for Frank Hague but I think that it is about time that something was done to arrest the vicious, concerted campaign of calumny directed against him as a result of the now celebrated Longo trial.

THE COMMONWEAL, in its innocence, made its contribution to promoting this campaign of falsehood by featuring an article some time ago by a person who professed to be familiar with the facts of the case and who used the pseudonym "Gilbert Gabriel," if my memory serves me faithfully. This party endeavored to give the impression to COMMONWEAL readers that Longo was summarily indicted, tried, convicted and sentenced without having an opportunity to secure counsel and to properly prepare and present his case. Nothing could be further from the truth. The facts are: Longo had at least six months to prepare his case after his indictment; he was represented by a lawyer during the whole of this period; when the case was originally scheduled for trial, Longo failed to appear and forfeited his bail, which the much-abused trial judge, Thomas H. Brown, subsequently restored to him; he secured at least four adjournments for various reasons and then, when Judge Brown, wearied and exasperated by the dilatory and provoking tactics of the defense, set the case down peremptorily for trial, on that date Longo endeavored to gain further delay by substituting lawyers at the last moment. Was there anything so outrageous and unjust in the conduct of Judge Brown in then ordering the trial to proceed, especially in view of the fact that Longo's lawyer, who was thoroughly familiar with the case and who had been trying the case at frequent intervals in the newspapers since the indictment, appeared with him at that time?

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And what mention, may I ask, has been made by THE COMMONWEAL'S Mr. Gabriel and the other vocal supporters of Longo that all the witnesses against him were anti-Hague Republicans and that the chief witness against him, Owen Grundy, was his life-long friend and alleged collaborator in the crime charged, who strove by turning State's witness, to avoid the fate which has now descended upon Longo!

And the editors of THE COMMONWEAL reveal an amazing naïveté about criminal trials when, in this week's editorial (November 30) they imply that there was something unsavory about the trial because the prosecution did not reveal to the Jury that Owen Grundy had previously denied at a Grand Jury hearing that he and Longo committed the crime charged and that a handwriting expert, consulted by the Prosecutor, gave it as his opinion that the voting record had not been changed in the manner alleged. These two matters were subjects for presentation by the defense. It is not the function of the Prosecutor to present the State's case and, then, in behalf of the defendant, to attempt to demolish it. Nor can anything unethical or wrongful be imputed to the Prosecutor because he proceeded in the case with a knowledge of these two facts, inasmuch as their probative value, as bearing on the fact of the commission of the crime charged, was very weak; firstly, because it is no uncommon thing for a criminal to deny, under oath, that he has committed a certain crime and then, later, when he perceives that the evidence against him is pyramiding, in an effort to obtain leniency for himself, confess the commission of the crime and thus implicate others, and, secondly, as every lawyer knows, expert testimony, at best, is frequently of a very uncertain and inconclusive character, especially when it tends to contradict the testimony of five eye-witnesses whose veracity was not impugned by the suspicion of any base motive.

I am not now stating that Longo is indubitably guilty of the crime charged but I believe that I am warranted in stating that, in the light of all the facts which have yet been made public, there is not another jury under heaven, faithful to its duty to render a just and true verdict, that could bring in any other verdict but that of "guilty of the offense charged." Perhaps Longo and his supporters have uncovered some evidence which will establish his innocence but, until that is presented and sustained in the proper forum, no respectable, responsible and honorable journal ought to encourage the malignant rantings of those who are much less interested in Mr. Longo than they are in securing as much publicity as they can for themselves out of his unfortunate predicament.

I hope that you will not infer that I am charging you with want of rectitude in lending your voice to the chorus of the tendentious group whose *forte* is misrepresentation and calumny. But I must confess that I do marvel at your ingenuousness—in an age so prolific of fakers—in being ready to take at face value the pretensions of those self-appointed champions of civic virtue and good government.

EUGENE P. KENNY.

We are happy to print Mr. Kenny's letter, since his argument gives the appearance of being most cogent. If the Longo case had no political aspects, Mr. Kenny's appraisal of it would be perfectly fair. The points raised by Longo's friends are substantially two: that he had great difficulty in securing counsel actually willing to appear for him in court, and that it was part of the duty of the Prosecutor to produce in court any *testimony available to him but not to the defendant. As to the first of these allegations, we are unable to form a judgment, since only personal participation in the case would be a real basis for judgment; some of those defending Longo certainly fall into the category described by Mr. Kenny, but others do not, and we feel that the opinion of the best of Longo's supporters deserves real consideration. With the second allegation we believe that even Mr. Kenny should agree, since as an attorney he must realize that the function of a prosecutor, as repeatedly defined by the US Supreme Court, extends beyond that of an ordinary lawyer seeking to win a case.*

We believe it is worth quoting from a celebrated decision in this connection since so many people seem not properly to understand a prosecutor's function: "The US attorney is the representative not of an ordinary party to a controversy, but of a sovereignty whose obligation to govern impartially is as compelling as its obligation to govern at all; and whose interest, therefore, in a criminal prosecution is not that it shall win a case, but that justice shall be done. As such, he is in a peculiar and very definite sense the servant of the law, the twofold aim of which is that guilt shall not escape or innocence suffer. He may prosecute with earnestness and vigor—indeed, he should do so. But, while he may strike hard blows, he is not at liberty to strike foul ones. It is as much his duty to refrain from improper methods calculated to produce a wrongful conviction as it is to use every legitimate means to bring about a just one." (*Berger* vs *US*, 295 *US* 78. *Quoted with approval in Viereck* vs *US*, 318 *US* 236.) *The only possible question at issue here is whether the expert testimony favorable to Longo was known to him at the time of the trial. If it was, then of course the Prosecutor did nothing improper by not introducing it. If it was not, then we hold that he acted improperly by withholding it.*

And simply because of the unquestioned political aspect of the trial, we believe that everyone involved should have leaned over backward to make certain that Longo's conviction was justified—if it was justified. We do not believe that this was done.—THE EDITORS.

TWO CORRECTIONS

In THE COMMONWEAL *for November* 16 *appeared an article entitled "The Twentieth of July* 1944," *the author of which was given as Emil Dorrfat. The name should have been* Dovifat. *In our issue of December* 14, *a letter from Theodore Maynard published in the "Communications" column, headed "Rose Hawthorne Lathrop," was dated from Westminster, Md., whereas it should have been dated from State Sanatorium, Md.*—THE EDITORS.

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The Stage & Screen

The French Touch

IN A designer's week, I think George Jenkins's setting for this miniscule farce by Joseph Fields and Jerome Chodorov could be said to take a signal lead. It is true that the problem was an intriguing and not particularly difficult one. As the action takes place backstage in a theater in Paris, any kind of trapping and frippery would have been acceptable, but Mr. Jenkins's choice seemed to me exactly right both as to ground-plan and color and glint. Unfortunately, neither the authors nor René Clair, the director, nor any of the actors seem able to use this provocative mounting with point. The piece is silly and takes a long time. The story of a renowned French actor during the occupation and of his three wives, all of whom are opposed to collaboration and determined theatrically to outwit the German Minister of Culture, the thing rises to an absurd climax, after a number of excursions into flimsy erotica, and manifestly succeeds in ruining a potential theme. In the hands of a Molnar, or Kaufman and Hart, the story would have been greatly different, on both sides of the foots, and it is bad to see it wasted. On the other hand, I am not sure, particularly in the case of Brian Aherne, what the present cast might have effected with better material. Mr. Aherne lacks humor, I think, and is apt to substitute for it with grandiloquence and with a kind of loudness which can only mean that he is listening to his own voice. Here, as the actor, he plays in profile, à la Barrymore, and gives a most respiratory performance, between every snort a snore, between every snore a kind of snarl. As foil to all this, Arlene Francis is certainly quieter, but I do not find her intimately lyrical voice either attractive or real. Jacqueline Dalya, reading a little tough girl, comes off only as vulgar. There is, I suppose, some justice in actors who play actors being as pretentious, pompous, loud and much ado as possible, but not to the point of boredom surely, only to the point of wit. (*At the Cort.*)

Brighten the Corner

CALLED a comedy, although certainly again a farce, John Cecil Holm's latest also depends largely on his designer. But here the problem is at once more subtle and more representative. One doesn't know whether to take Hollywood or John van Druten to task (or rather down to the head of the class) for the recent symptoms of scripts being "movied" on to the stage. I expect the safest angle is to give Mr. van Druten credit for being the first to utilize a purely camera technique. In any case, from "Turtle" to "Mama" to "The Glass Menagerie" to this offering (and I am omitting a number of flopped descendants) one finds the dramatist's most serious snag—that of exposition and of motivated exits and entrances—architecturally solved. In "The Voice of the Turtle" when the heroine goes into the kitchen, she needs no explanation; we see her going and we see her there, and the solution is the same for her visits to her bedroom. Likewise in "Mama" we are taken not only up and down in the house but on the street in the home-set, which device the Tennessee Williams hit duplicates. The effect of all this building is various, naturally, entirely dependent upon the worth of its play, but I may say that my intermittent reaction to the hopscotch and ring-a-round expedited by it makes me long for a good old movie closeup in order to simulate some intensity, some pretense at participation on the audience's side. Or at least some long Hitchcockian vistas for variety. One feels, if things keep progressing on this line, that the first qualifications for a stage actor will be those resembling a marathon dancer's; the first qualifications for a dramatist those of an engineer: a man making a plan which can be successfully constructed, then swiveled, swung, linked and pulleyed. Thirty years ago, after the pre-war, the critics were calling ours a designer's theater. As far as I can see, we've been on a revolving stage ever since.

Needless to say, the problem is too involved and interesting to fit into this inexpensive column, and I think even these facetious comments are prejudicial when directed at Mr. Holm's often neat, sometimes very funny, small business. They were occasioned simply by his writing for the usual double set—cleverly fangled by Willis Knighton—in which the lobby of his modern apartment scene with its elevator and stairs, is simultaneously on view. There is no question that this arrangement constituted seventy-five percent of Mr. Holm's play: points were made by it, laughs accomplished, double information received by the house. And since his play came off for me as a farce—situation rather than character—the business seemed legitimate. I wish I could clearly tell why it bothered me. To begin with, the method overweights things mechanically, it always seems too crowded, and just because it resembles nothing so much as my old-fashioned doll's house, whose front swung back so that you could play with all of the family in all of the rooms at once, the people set in this manner irrevocably impress me as dolls: everyone miniature, every thing, every question. It is true, of course, that Mr. Holm makes no claim for his people being more than economically life-size. The story of a rich wild uncle descending on a young couple recently reunited after a war-separation, the thing uses the traditional tricks, there is someone behind every door, mistaken identity motivates the action throughout. Occasionally hilarious, I think with a little more *stuff* spread over its three acts, the author would have had a straight smash. As it is, I found it vastly more amusing than "Dear Ruth" or any of the other assorted juvenilia. Lenore Lonergan, in her first adult part, I thought fine and funny, although her running-mate, Phyllis Avery, seemed little more than a weak imitation. And Charles Butterworth is as endearing as he is silly. George Petrie is good. I think the only honest conclusion to this self-indulgent discussion will be that Mr. Holm has methodized correctly for his material, but as *writing* interests me as much as *wrighting,* I don't think the builded play is worth the camera, by a long shot, or even a close-up. (*At the Lyceum.*)

KAPPO PHELAN.

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Drama with a Capital D

SINCE FEW authors of a sequel hit the same jackpot that ran so brilliantly on the first success, I went to *"The Bells of St. Mary's"* without too great expectations and consequently was not disappointed. In fact I found it pleasantly entertaining in spite of its faults. Producer-director Leo McCarey, whose ears were still ringing with last year's triumph, wrote another story in the same vein, let Dudley Nichols fashion it into a screenplay and got Bing Crosby to continue his impersonations of a charming, likable priest. This time Father O'Malley (formerly of the "Going My Way" parish) comes to the rescue of a parochial school and learns, as his housekeeper (Una O'Connor) warned he would, "what it means to be up to your neck in nuns." As Sister Superior, Ingrid Bergman looks indeed lovely and gives another of her outstanding performances; but she cannot take the place of Barry Fitzgerald whose portrayal in the former picture stands as one of the best examples of acting in cinema. Unfortunately "The Bells" heightens the gushing bluebird weaknesses of "Going" and fails to compensate with realistic situations. The script is at times sentimentally contrived, especially in the sequences connected with the grumpy factory owner (Henry Travers) whose building next door the nuns hope to acquire to replace their dilapidated school and in the scenes centered around the estranged couple (Martha Sleeper and William Gargan) whose daughter (Joan Carroll) the priest and nuns are befriending. Furthermore I couldn't help feeling that the picture's climax, in which the ailing Sister Superior is to be sent away without being told about her illness, is pure hokum and dishonest. However, the film's assets are many. The human side of the religious is again stressed; and the whole piece, though episodic, is rich in character and humor which put one in a warm glow. Among its high spots are Bing's singing, Bergman in nun's garb teaching a youngster the manly art of self-defense, the spirited arguments between priest and nun that grow rather bitter occasionally although each is pulling for the Church and St. Mary's School. And there is one scene that is pure cinematic genius; as far as I know it has never been done before; it shows the tiny tots at St. Mary's enacting, in a manner that seems entirely impromptu, their own version of the Nativity; and it ends not with the chanting of Christmas carols but with the children singing to the Baby "Happy Birthday to You."

Although *"The Enchanted Forest"* also gets a little sticky in sentiment, its redeeming features make a movie well worth seeing particularly for its pictorial beauty and theme. Photographed in Cinecolor, using natural woodland scenery as locale and many wild animals among its actors, this unusual picture tells the story of a group of people whose lives were changed by the forest's power of contentment. Its people-characters include Old John (Harry Davenport) who has lived alone communing with animals and nature for many years; the little boy (Billy Severn) for whom he has been caring ever since he found the child after a train wreck; the boy's mother (Brenda Joyce), a neurotic who is brought back to the forest years later by a wise doctor (Edmund Lowe) who hopes to cure this unhappy woman and build a sanitarium in the forest; the boy's grandfather (John Litel) who owns this vast stretch of land and sees it mainly as an investment in lumber. Among the animal-characters are a frog, dog, crow, squirrel, mountain lion, eagle, raccoon and other four- and two-footed friends of Old John and the boy. Producer Jack Schwarz wisely stressed the out-of-doors throughout the film, in which there are very few interior scenes; and Director Lew Landers allowed the action of the story to reveal itself as a modern fairy tale that could be true. He might have been even more successful along these lines if he had eliminated the woodsman who becomes the villain of the piece. But for nature-lovers and for all those who agree with Emerson that the trees were God's first temples, this film is a find.

If Hollywood continues to make war pictures that have the dignity and serious intention of *"They Were Expendable"* they would be more than welcome. Superbly produced and directed by John Ford, this movie tells the story of P-T boats in Philippine waters from the time immediately preceding Pearl Harbor when they were not considered seriously, until those days during 1942 when these light craft and their crews were rated high for the important work they were doing. "And their crews"—for in the fine screenplay that Frank Wead based on William L. White's book, and throughout Ford's direction, the men, the meaning of war and human lives are emphasized. This picture is no glamorizing of combat, no idyl sung to the glory of fighting and dying. In a series of realistic scenes, it shows the exploits of the boats and men who worked on them. It frankly admits that many of these men acted like eager beavers anxious to get into the fray; but even more vividly it portrays the aftermath and wounded. There are many sequences like the one in which a tired doctor operates on man after man almost in factory-like succession; there are many scenes of death. Of course there are also episodes of warmth and comradeship that develop the strong feeling that fighters have for each other: the awkward playfulness of the men as they visit one of their dying buddies, or the stilted efforts at entertaining a nurse who has come to have dinner with her beau. The film handles this suggestion of a love story between one of the officers (John Wayne) and this young woman (Donna Reed) extremely well. The quality of the acting draws praise for those performers who made the small rôles lifelike, and for the entire cast right up to Robert Montgomery as the first skipper, whose concern for his men is as great as any other part of his difficult work. My only complaint against this film is its length; although it uses only a few of the clichés from other war films and these could be cut easily, it has many scenes of these small boats attacking Jap cruisers on night raids. While they are effectively photographed and assert again the value of P-T boats in raids, they do lengthen a long picture. There is, however, one magnificent episode from which I would not want one foot of film cut; this shows the removal of General MacArthur and other officers from Bataan to Mindanao; it is executed with

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excellent taste and with hushed respect for the full meaning of this historic event. In fact the whole film deserves a hand for its unaffected tribute to P-T boats and their crews—both were indeed expendable.

PHILIP T. HARTUNG.

Portraits and Parables:

Some Notes on the First Two Weeks of the Opera

The Vows: Offstage and On

"BEAUTY is the promise of happiness." The Metropolitan began its season with Wagner's "Lohengrin." We look to beginnings as vows, and it is an unfortunate beginning that deals with broken ones. "Lohengrin" is the opera of the broken vow, the opera of promised happiness withdrawn and thus of unfulfilled beauty.

There is too much of the official world in "Lohengrin" and it intrudes without being made the enemy—as it should have been, as the Prelude to the opera tells us it is. For the pageantry in the first act is dull, the procession in the second act duller, and the wedding march in the third unspeakable. When "Lohengrin" takes life and wears beauty, it is in the contact of personalities so real as to be symbolic: Elsa's dream (Elsa and herself), Otrud and Telramund, Otrud and Elsa, Elsa and Lohengrin. Otherwise it rambles. The final curtain is a failure. This terrible parting of husband and wife has been cheapened to a public spectacle complete with a conjuror's zoo.

Beethoven's "Fidelio" is the opera of the fulfilled vow. All bravery and faithfulness are possible here, for the official world (in the form of Don Pizarro) is recognized as the enemy to vows. This world exists *only* by vows, and unable to rise above its own knot of them with faith, must destroy all vows that faith has blessed. The different worlds reveal themselves in their attitude to what can be accomplished in Time. Pizarro, bent on revenge, sings *"Ha! Welch' ein Augenblick";* Leonora, removing her husband's fetters, sings *"Gott, welch' ein Augenblick."* The chorus is admissible here, an example is being set, and they sing *"Heil sei dem Tag, heil sei der Stunde."* Time is blessed.

Leonora is so human and so much a woman that the addition of music makes her a force, a will to triumph. Elsa is human in her weaknesses, and music reduces her to a series of exalted fluctuations, often beautiful, but adding up to neither a person nor a symbol. To project her on the stage requires great presence, and unfortunately Miss Traubel is never really on the stage, she merely stops there on her way from the wings to the wings. The last time I heard "Lohengrin" it featured Mme. Flagstad and I should like to hear her again. It seems to me Mr. Johnson's statements to the press regarding Mme. Flagstad's political troubles were extremely casual. Perhaps I am ungrateful to complain, Miss Traubel isn't that bad; but I feel the Metropolitan owes at least a more definite stand to the singer who virtually saved it from bankruptcy at one point. All we really know now is that Mme. Flagstad remained with her husband.

Some critics, I recall, complained that the dialogue in "Fidelio" was old-fashioned. Perhaps they also think married love is. I do not.

The Passions as a Raison D'être

IT IS interesting to speculate, while hearing "Rigoletto," on which of the characters Verdi liked best, or whether he liked any of them at all. For Gilda is almost too sympathetic: so pliable, so spontaneous, so self-effacing. One pities her plight and not her. And Rigoletto, here is someone to understand, even to help; but had not terrible things happened to him, we could do no more than despise his wit and superstition. He is incapable of forgiveness. Perhaps then it is the young Duke, a tenor to the center of his being, and superficial even there, that is really likable. After all, he does inspire Gilda to the one positive act of her life—her sacrifice of it: and what is more, he is lucky and has the best tunes to sing. Can one ask for much else?

But, when one looks closer, one finds the really peculiar thing: there are no characters. There is no Duke, there is only philandering and charm and activation, a fortunate repertory of passions. That is why the stoutest tenor alive, be only his voice bright, can play the non-existent handsome one. And the other pair, father and daughter; they only live to react. Exaltation, despair, possessiveness, revenge—these are their excuse for us. Their justification and their eternity are in the Verdi music that virtually thrusts them over the orchestra pit at us even while it reduces them to elements. Only the elements can bring this opera to its climax, which is acted in the darkness that comes from behind the world and makes our abstractions seem real for a moment.

I know of no other opera in which so much is made of the question of names: Rigoletto does not tell his daughter his, the Duke gives her a false one (her "big" aria, "Care Nome," expresses joy at being able to name him), the assassin announces his with the dignity of death itself. There is about this an anxiety to assume reality, for names belong to people, and it is people who may understand each other; the passions cannot even understand themselves. "What is his name?" asks the assassin, receiving money to murder the Duke whom he only knows as a young officer. "His name is Crime, and mine is Punishment," Rigoletto answers, and a violent storm breaks immediately. Yet Rigoletto is wrong, the Duke survives; and one is never certain what Nature meant by its participation. The mystery of the passions in a fallen world is not solved for long by labelling them.

Reason as a Passion

THE philosophy of enlightenment, of rational deliverance, is the informing power behind "Die Zauberflöte." It is easy to dismiss this as a bare naïveté only excused by the music that clothes it. But what sophisticated music! And has anyone pointed out that it is the magic flute, given Tamino by the Queen of the Night

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(ostensibly the ruler of Superstition) and the love of Pamina (*her* daughter) which makes it possible for him to pass the trials in the Temple of Reason?

The characters of "Die Zauberflöte" are symbolic or nothing, and the symbolism has been far from exhausted by those who have examined it. One thing is sure, it leads quite logically to those romantic years when the passionate cry for freedom was as yet, in the fullest sense, reasonable.

Affirmations

AMONG the first week's operas was woven a short narrative, the seed of an epic. I present it in outline: in "Die Zauberflöte (1791) occurs the phrase, *"Ja, Ja, die Liebe ist's allein,"* and the voice line leaps to accentuate the first two words. In "Fidelio" (1805) the voices rise in calm confidence for *"Ja, ja, sie (die Liebe) wird's erreichen."* And with what charming resignation the Princess exits in "Der Rosenkavalier" (1911), her voice dropping on those same words, *"Ja, ja."* Here is the history of a culture soon ready for any affirmation *but* Love.

In the never-never-land of "Die Zauberflöte" the heroine, Pamina, contributes its most stirring single moment when, about to be discovered in an attempt to flee her benefactor, she nevertheless says that she will speak only *"Die Wahrheit."* The words are strong, the whole phrase noble. I could not help thinking of another heroine, Mélisande, in another never-never-land who, having lost her husband's ring, also says that she will tell him *"la vérité."* At this the Debussy orchestra, like jesting Pilate, drifts delicately from under her words. Needless to say, she does *not* tell the truth at all.

Virgil Thomson wrote recently from Paris that "Pelléas et Mélisande" had now become the national monument in music. France did much better, I am sure, when "Robert le Diable" served that purpose.

(Note: In discussing "Die Zauberflöte" and "Fidelio" I am deliberately ignoring the fact that the Metropolitan has chosen to present them in English. I wish I could ignore this fact at performances.)

Pace and Repose: The Two Figaros

MME. SAYAO, an exemplary singer and otherwise probably the Metropolitan's finest lyric coloratura, committed a serious but interesting error of taste in Rossini's "Barbiere di Siviglia." The custom of most sopranos in the Lesson Scene of this opera is to interpolate a bravura aria, to set off vocal rockets with a brilliance that puts taste aside, and when Mme. Sayao elected to sing Mozart's "Deh Vieni" from "Le Nozze di Figaro," she put aside custom and raised serious questions.

Rossini was probably less interested in drawing character than any other great operatic composer. The music of the "Barber" hovers above the surface of life, it is a wind, "un auretta," a rumor, its condition is movement alone. His characters do not live and breathe, they simply contribute to the pace, their existence the most purely musical in opera. This work speeds and slows up almost of its own accord; it is truly abstract, and may exist only by our presence, by our permission. It cannot teach, it can only stir and sow.

Here is no fabric to grow things in, to grow those flowers of repose that Mozart is so lavish with. Listen to the Overture to "Le Nozze di Figaro." For a moment the bustle seems like Rossini's, but then the difference becomes apparent. It is the difference between a wind and an underground stream; and this stream is the basis for the whole opera that is to follow. What variety of color and formal motion can grow in that enriched soil! It invites, it symbolizes, it *is* in itself—and so completely that we are grateful. "Deh Vieni" is the bloom of an entirely dissimilar medium and to place it in the "Barber" robs it of its chance to glow.

But the Metropolitan evidently thinks Rossini half Mozart and half Mack Sennett, for the music went too slowly and the characters moved about too much. Yet there were enjoyable moments and, since Cesare Sodero, the conductor, seems to have so little idea of what variety means, let alone pace or accent, I was grateful for them.

CHESTER KALLMAN.

Books of the Week

Wartime Mission in Spain. Carlton J. H. Hayes. Macmillan, $3.00.

SO CONVINCING is Professor Hayes's account of his ambassadorship to Franco Spain from 1942 to 1945 that the critics almost to a man have admitted the success of his mission. The object was, of course, to ween Madrid away from the Axis and win more and more Spanish collaboration with the Allied cause. The facts the author presents as accomplished in this direction are indisputable. Happily Professor Hayes has a very direct and forceful style of writing—and he is spurred on here by his desire to justify himself in the minds of anyone who might have been taken in by the diatribes against him in some of the American leftish press.

In his efforts to make his own position clear the author has unwittingly made a highly misleading statement about THE COMMONWEAL. He cites as evidence of his unwillingness to espouse the cause of General Franco during the Spanish Civil War a letter "written on May 4, 1937 to the Editor of THE COMMONWEAL" to protest against the calling of a pro-Nationalist Madison Square Garden mass meeting under this magazine's auspices. As this is his only reference to THE COMMONWEAL, readers not familiar with our Spanish stand will conclude that this magazine has consistently supported the Franco cause just as every other American Catholic periodical of general circulation supported it. The fact is that it was the present editors' opposition to the policy culminating to the Madison Square Garden meeting that led in 1938 to a change of ownership. From then on THE COMMONWEAL'S constant disaffection for General Franco—in the face of considerable pressure—has been manifest.

What the critics have not liked about Professor Hayes's book is his attack upon irresponsible American journals of the Left which consistently advocated American intervention in Spain even while we were in mortal conflict with both Hitler and Japan. They also seem to sense that he does not share their bitter personal aversion for

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the Spanish dictator. Professor Hayes is rightfully irritated that *PM* and other journals did, at times, interfere with his efforts to bring Franco more and more onto the Allied bandwagon. It is genuinely difficult to find any references to the Caudillo in this book which indicate any special sympathy for him on the part of our wartime ambassador. Quite the contrary. (Even if Professor Hayes hardly seems to consider him in the same bracket with Hitler or Mussolini.) But the impressions of the General on the few occasions at which he and the Ambassador met were anything but highly flattering. Moreover, our Ambassador used these meetings as an opportunity to exert the most forceful pressure for the Allied cause. It was consistent with the now seldom mentioned Atlantic Charter that the United States should seek during the war to influence the course of Spanish foreign policy (and succeed in doing so), but not to meddle in Spain's internal set-up. Mr. Hayes's mission, in other words, was strictly circumscribed. After reading this lively personal record of solid diplomatic accomplishment, I find it hard to conceive of Mr. Roosevelt's having picked a better man for the task.

EDWARD SKILLIN, JR.

The Shelley Legend. Robert Metcalf Smith. Scribner's. $5.00.

PROFESSOR SMITH, in collaboration with Martha M. Schlegel, Theodore G. Ehrsam, the handwriting expert, Louis A. Waters, photostat technicians, and others (finger-print specialists and F.B.I. men were not called in on the case), sets out to demolish the so-called Shelley Legend, a term used to characterize "fallacious views about the life of Shelley and his writings which have grown up principally under the careful supervision first of Mary Shelley and after her death, in 1851, of Lady Shelley," and including "various other chicaneries subsequently foisted by others upon admirers of the poet and his writings."

The book is divided into five sections. Part I deals with the origins and growth of the legend during Mary's life; Part II is a study of the handwritings of Shelley and his circle; Part III is an exposure of the Major Byron forgeries; Part IV treats of Lady Shelley's carrying on of the legend; while Part V is mainly an examination of the Shelley Society and its publications.

The uncovering of frauds, forgeries, and defamations, and the vigorous castigation of distortions, suppressions, sentimentalities, together with numerous other reprehensibilities personal and literary, make this quite obviously an indispensable piece of research. It is, besides, a rich repository of critical gems, some extraordinarily just and sapient, some almost suffocatingly vapid, and others (like Rampion's diatribe in "Point Counter Point") a wee bit on the malicious side.

But it is also, through no fault of the authors, often a very depressing book—a confusing, annoying, and disillusioning book. We'll never again be able to open a volume of Shelley's letters without being haunted by the ghosts of Major Byron or Thomas J. Wise flitting impishly across the pages. We are not even sure that in time we won't come to agree with staid Principal Shairp that a "taint, though not so perceptible in the lyrics, still hangs more or less over many of the finest" of Shelley's poems. "Bugs" everywhere. And for another thing, isn't it highly possible that Shelley research may soon degenerate into a game?

With all the brain power stored up in the faculties of our universities, and, so we are reliably informed, much of it quietly rotting, what a shame that a little of it can't be brought to bear on some tremendously urgent, philosophically crucial problems. In the light (the hideously glaring light) of recent atomic developments, we can think of no more timely (and solid) project than a comparative evaluation of the following: "Prometheus Bound," "An Essay on Man," "Candide," "Rasselas," Prometheus Unbound," "Quo Vadis?" and "God and Philosophy." What an intellectual "chain-reaction" that might turn out to be, especially if it happened to issue from the "laboratory" of Prof. Bredvold at Michigan or Prof. Douglas Bush at Harvard.

Since "The Shelley Legend" demonstrates that we are, substantially, right back where Matthew Arnold started from, we're going to get away from it all by returning to "Nightmare Abbey" for the umpteenth time. And if anybody tries to tell us that Major Byron or T. J. Wise wrote *that,* we will definitely not be amused.

JOHN ABBOT CLARK.

Christine Roux. Thames Williamson. Current Books. $2.50.

"LET the Church take the women who are incapable of creating normal homes. Women, who, on the contrary, are natural wives and mothers, these must marry and rear children." This advice, put in the mouth of a priest, was addressed to Christine Roux, a Dominican novice, exiled from her convent by the French law of 1905, when she begs to be sent to the Indochinese Missions after a year of lay life in Paris.

Mr. Williamson's story follows the Parisian adventures of Christine and provides a specious meeting ground for piety and passion. Within an hour of her leaving the convent, Christine becomes involved with Theo, a simple young marketman, who insists on driving her into Paris when she misses her train. Theo asks her to marry him. Not so Julien. Julien is an aristocrat, the head of the Government department where Christine finds work. Julien encourages her celibate ideal to preserve her purity for his own effete enjoyment. He even buys her an iron crucifix with sharp points to keep her reminded of her vows. Along with the decadent episode is the sordid one of the young postulant who is determined to find a rich lover.

The manipulation of the plot is clumsy and presents many discrepancies. The sub-prioress would hardly have sent Christine alone to Paris without taking some safeguards or making sure that there was a night train. Christine would naturally have returned to the convent instead of trying to walk to Paris and since the Convent of Our Lady must have been within a twenty-five-mile radius if Theo drove his horses in to Les Halles, it then follows that Christine would never have been sent off on an evening train which couldn't possibly have taken all night to reach Paris but which would have brought her there at a dangerous hour and much too late for any conventual schedule. When Christine found next morning that the Paris convent had already been abandoned and appealed to the parish priest, he would either have got in touch with her superiors or have placed her with some of the other dispossessed nuns. Instead he recommends her for a position, gives her money for a lodging but never tells her to come back and report to him. Had Christine been as pure as pictured, wouldn't she have

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known intuitively that Julien was not an appropriate companion? Even if that is open to argument, Mr. Williamson has slipped up in his description of a "venia." The venia is a prostration employed in the Dominicans in acknowledgment of a fault that endures only until the prior or prioress raps, ordinarily after a very short interval. The venia imposed on the youngest postulant in the story is to prostrate herself all during dinner on the refectory floor for thirty days. It happens that no such penance exists in the Dominican Constitutions so it would not only have been against the natural law for the novice mistress to impose such a fast upon a growing girl but in defiance of the Rule.

According to the author, the women who enter the cloister are: "those who shrink from the responsibilities of the lay world; and those who are natural worshippers, nurses, instruments of mercy; those who are taking refuge from grief; others who are carried away by the pageantry and mystery of religion; and still others who find themselves in a cloister entirely by accident." "Worshippers" seem to be his closest approach to what Catholics call a "vocation." Mr. Williamson's thesis, which he unwisely states through the priest, is that woman's first duty is to her country as wife and mother; the culls are for the Church. Of course it is the contrary to the very last statement of Pope Pius XII in which he says that although the whole civilized world and the Church herself benefit from a "genuine marriage unions," yet the common good is not jeopardized by the many men and women who sacrifice the possibility of a family life of their own to consecrate themselves to Christ and the service of mankind, "in an act incomparably broader in its scope, more all-embracing and more universal."

Very likely Christine Roux was better suited to be Theo's wife than a missionary, but certainly the law of 1905 closing the convents did not increase the birth rate in France. Mr. Williamson's writing is better than his subject matter. E. V. R. WYATT.

Essay on Rime. Karl Shapiro. Reynall. $2.00.

THE MAN who loves rime should talk about it, Karl Shapiro contends, hence this work which, by its metrical form bears testimony to such a love. Not that any proof is needed, for Mr. Shapiro is the author of two distinguished books of verse: "Person, Place and Thing" for which he received a Guggenheim Fellowship (and a special award from the American Academy of Arts and Letters) and "V-Letter" for which he was awarded the Pulitzer Prize. However, since he states as one of his axioms that poets should sing about things and not discourse on ideas, which is the prerogative of the philosophers, the form he has chosen would seem to be paradoxical. Recognizing this, Shapiro points out that the present work is an attempt to seduce poets back to an emotional use of language as well as to evoke, suggest and give pleasure in criticism.

"Essay on Rime" deals with "the triple confusion in modern rime"—in prosody, in language and in belief. Prosody, Shapiro defines as "rime's deportment, movement, melody," distinguishing between the scansion of the eye where the line visualized is the unit, and scansion of the ear where the stress is heard and not visualized. In the upheaval of modern poetry, the classical scansion of the eye has been displaced by the rougher, more immediate rhythms of the latter type of scansion which he has labelled "prose metric." Two of the outstanding authorities on English prosody, Lanier and Saintsbury, envisioned a marriage between prose and rime which Shapiro suggests has been achieved in "Ulysses." But the reflexivity of modern writing has led to a preoccupation with obtaining effects—an aspect of the trend of poetry toward science which Shapiro has taken up his pen to combat.

The second confusion in language again stems from the breakdown of art. Event and artefact have become interchangeable so that fact is dramatized and lyricized rather than reported, and artists, casting aside restraint, no longer "process experience" but use it "raw" and "untreated." Beside this blunting of intention is the disintegration of the artist's personality due to his affecting of "multiple expression"—the cultivation of style for its own sake. So, too, grammatical correctness and rhetorical manipulation become ends in themselves and are gradually dissipated in abstraction.

The final section traces the confusions of beliefs reflected in the enthronement of "art as the supreme criterion of experience." Shapiro does not feel that art necessarily requires belief but that "the *solicitude* of modern artists for their missing gods" (italics mine) has proved undermining. He claims not to be concerned with the truth or falsity of such "substitute" religions as Darwinism, Marxism and Freudianism but only with the integrity and conviction of the poetry that results. And yet, he seems to be accusing materialism and empiricism of binding poetry to evidence and fact:

> Finally how
> Has poetry as the vision of the soul
> Descended to the poetry of sensation,
> And that translated to the perceptive kind,
> Evolved into the poetry of ideas?

Once again, here is Shapiro's central point, that modern poetry is too intellectual, too inclusive, too abstract. This conclusion he bolsters with Freud's pronouncement that the arts are "beneficent and harmless forms" thereby establishing a "sane perspective" which will bring "the beloved creative function back to scale."

A strange poem this, to be written by one who poses the question:

> " where is the literature
> Of Nature, where the love poem and the plain
> Statement of feeling?"

In fact, it is a strange poem for a talented poet to have written since its real failure is on the level of form. The order is logical, for the most part, and not poetic and does not animate the language, which seems heavy and lifeless throughout even when the words, images and ideas are successful. There are none of the brilliant lines that grace Horace, Boileau and Pope where verse lends inevitability to critical insight or flavors it with satire. Such a work as this, written as it was, on active duty in the Pacific, far from books and other resources, must necessarily be something of a tour de force. But it could have been composed for the sheer pleasure of the thing, as the poet himself suggests—by one "with a true love of rime." Such rimes as "misnomers" and "Homers," "per se" and "La Belle Sans Merci" seemed to promise a witty, original and somehow indigenous medium of the *New Yorker* variety. But instead, "Essay on Rime" is pretentious, serious-minded, lead-footed. It is perhaps happiest to regard it as one of those unsuccessful experiments with a new technique that pave the way to the final development of the mature poet. PEGGY STERN.

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History of World War II. Francis Trevelyan Miller. Winston. $5.00.
The War—Fifth Year. Edgar McInnis. Oxford. $2.50.

THE FIRST of these is a thousand-page, liberally illustrated summary of the conflict, beginning with a study of the rise of Hitler and Mussolini. As a reference book for the period — and indeed as a personal memento of the terrible struggle—it is invaluable. Over two hundred editors from thirty countries collaborated with the author.

The fifth volume of Professor McInnis's imposing history of the war is a quarter by quarter description beginning October, 1943. Maps serve as the only illustrations, eighteen in all, taken from the New York *Times*. It is a straight account of military, naval and air campaigns, and the volume ends with the failure of the attempt to assassinate Hitler on July 20, 1944. The official texts of the Moscow, Cairo and Teheran conferences, of the treaties between Russia and Czechoslovakia, Rumania and Finland comprise part of a brief but useful appendix.

My Twenty-five Years in China. John B. Powell. Macmillan. $3.50.

"J. B." is first of all a seasoned reporter and editor. He has been foreign corespondent for such solid publications as the *Manchester Guardian,* for papers like the London *Daily Herald* and *Chicago Tribune.* John Benjamin Powell is a Missourian. He seems never to have liked aggressive people, even at home. In China, as editor of the *China Weekly Review* and managing director of the China Press, he developed a powerful dislike of all the things Japanese had begun to do there as early as 1917, and expressed himself so fearlessly and without restraint, that by 1940 he had become the Japanese Political Police's No. 1 public enemy. In his twenty-five years he has covered much of the territory which is the heart of the Pacific war. Possibly, his observations are even more interesting to Catholic missions in their expanding activities in the Near East than to students of diplomacy and research workers in current history of the Pacific Basin. Whatever facet of his adventurous life he presents, however, in this book, is interesting and his story is well told.

WILLIAM FRANKLIN SANDS.

Encyclopedia of the Arts. Edited by Dagobert D. Runes and Harry G. Schrickel. Philosophical. $10.00.

THIS is an annoying book. It consists of an alphabetical arrangement of articles on all the various arts, but entirely under topic headings. Thus you would seek in vain for the name of any given artist, since what the book has to say about him appears under the designation given to his school or epoch. And since there is no index of proper names, you can spend quite a while trying to obtain any given biographical information. To show the extremes to which this awkward system is carried, you would have to look under "post-revolutionary painting and sculpture in the USA" to find out anything concerning, let us say, John LaFarge, and for John Singleton Copley, you must look under the *E's,* "early American art." But for one thing this encyclopedia is truly useful—its articles on techniques. They are certainly not exhaustive, but in short compass they answer the questions you would be likely to ask about the subjects with which they deal, and they are to be found alphabetized in a normal fashion. Thus stained glass appears under S.

A Few, Last Minute, Holiday Notions

WE LIST here a dozen or so books, the first four for adults, the fifth for both adults and young people and the remainder for young people. All of these publications have reached us since the first of December, and copies may be available in bookstores to fill last minute gift needs.

A BENJAMIN FRANKLIN READER. Edited by Nathan G. Goodman. Crowell. $3.50. This is the second collection of Franklin material to be published this fall. It is a good bargain, and contains many fascinating excerpts, especially from Franklin's correspondence. It is full of nuggets easily to be mined.

ROUAULT. Edward Alden Jewell. Hyperion. $3.00. Of three Hyperion publications newly issued this fall, this is perhaps the most interesting. The text is certainly not brilliant, but the illustrations are admirable and are large enough really to tell their story.

DEGAS. Camille Mauclair. Hyperion. $3.00. Mr. Mauclair's text is pleasant and vivacious, but as in all such volumes what matters is the illustrative material, which is admirably reproduced, much of it in full color.

RODIN. Philip R. Adams. Hyperion. $3.00. This monograph is particularly useful for the large number of drawings and water colors it reproduces. From it Rodin's stature as a sculptor emerges even greater than before. The illustrative material is first class.

RUSSIAN FAIRY TALES. Translated from Afanasiev's collection by Norbert Guterman. Folkloristic commentary by Roman Jakobson. Illustrations by A. Alexeieff. Pantheon. $7.50. At the time of our Children's Book Number, only proofs of this magnificent volume were available. Now the completed book has appeared, and it can be enthusiastically recommended for any reader who likes folk tales. Here is what might be called the heart of Russian popular culture in its traditional form—a mixture of legend, fantasy, peasant common sense and cunning, and a bit of history. One suspects that an understanding reader would come away from the pages of this book with a truer understanding of the Russian mind and heart than he could obtain from many thousand pages of more solemn interpretative writing. Certainly one of this year's outstanding publishing achievements.

A BOOK OF WAYSIDE FRUITS. Margaret McKenny and Edith F. Johnston. Macmillan. $2.50. This volume is not strictly intended for younger readers, but will prove most useful to them if they have any interest in nature. It deals with thirty-three of the lesser American fruits and berries, and the illustrations are admirable for identification.

THE STORY OF JESUS FOR BOYS AND GIRLS. Catherine and Robb Beebe. Bruce. $2.00. This is as good a retelling of the life of Our Lord as one could ask for. There is always a certain shock in finding modern colloquial language substituted for the words of the New Testament, but perhaps it is necessary for very young children. The illustrations, although a trifle saccharine, serve their purpose.

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YOUTH REPLIES I CAN. Edited by May Lamberton Becker. Foreword by Elizabeth Morrow. Decorations by Warren Chapel. Knopf. $2.00. Thirteen stories of childhood contributions to resistance movements all over the world, several of them by distinguished writers.

SNOW OVER BETHELHEM. Katherine Milhous. Scribner. $2.00. This is a Christmas story of Bethlehem, Pennsylvania, and its Moravian settlers.

SING MOTHER GOOSE. Opal Wheeler and Marjorie Torrey. Dutton. $3.00. The best loved of Mother Goose rhymes with musical accompaniments. The illustrations are excellent of their sort.

NORTHERN LIGHTS. Mary Fabyan Windeatt and Sister Mary of the Compassion. Sheed. $1.75. This is the biography of Saint Hyacinth, of Poland, and is admirably told for young readers. The pictures have real distinction and strength.

FRENCH FAIRY TALES. Charles Perrault. Retold, with a foreword, by Louis Untermeyer. Illustrated by Gustave Dore. Didier. $1.75. Here are five traditional French tales with the illustrations that seem inevitable for them: Puss in Boots, Sleeping Beauty, Little Red Riding Hood, Hop-o'-my-Thumb, The Fairy.

THE REDCROSSE KNIGHT. A retelling of Book I of Spenser's Faerie Queene by Sister Mary Charitina, B.V.M. Illustrated by Jeanyee Wong. Sheed. $3.00. Presumably it is really necessary to retell Spenser if any child is to understand it, though naturally in the retelling the majesty of his language flits out the window. But the story remains a great one, and the illustrations are perfection.

Grosset & Dunlap are issuing a new series, to be called the Illustrated Junior Library. The idea seems to be handsomely issued reprints of children's classics, richly illustrated, generally by contemporary artists. The following are (or will be) available: Andersen's FAIRY TALES (illustrated by Arthur Szyk, $2.50); Anna Sewell's BLACK BEAUTY (illustrated by Fritz Eichenberg, $1.00); and Mary Mapes Dodge's HANS BRINKER (illustrated by Cyrus Leroy Baldridge, $1.50).

STUART LITTLE. E. B. White and Garth Williams. Harper. $2.00. Much praise has been bestowed upon this fantasy, which involves the birth into a New York family of a mouse, who proceeds to have many adventures and misadventures. Mr. White, brilliant editorial writer for the *New Yorker,* valiantly exercises his imagination, and the result will delight many readers both young and old.

HARRY LORIN BINSSE.

CONTRIBUTORS

Thomas P. NEILL is a member of the Department of History and Government, St. Louis University, St. Louis, Mo. This article is a condensed version of a talk given in St. Louis, as well as in the "Christian Culture Series" sponsored by Assumption College, Windsor, Ontario, on December 9.

Chester KALLMAN is a New York music critic.

John Abbot CLARK teaches at Michigan State Agricultural College, Lansing, Mich.

E. V. R. WYATT is the drama critic of the *Catholic World.*

Peggy STERN is doing graduate work at Columbia University, New York, N. Y.

William Franklin SANDS lives in Washington, D. C.

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